1995 March 6 P.7

Path to inspiration

Two conferences tackle artistic, intellectual sides of women

By DIANE NOLAND
STAFF WRITER

WOMEN take different avenues to find inspiration.

Two events planned to coincide with Women's History Month will take place for women Saturday – one to inspire artistic creation and the other success in the work sphere.

"Playing With Fire: Releasing the Artist Within," Cabrillo Women's Center's daylong festival on the college campus in Aptos, will include a variety of artistic expressions such as dancing, writing, acting, painting, drumming and singing.

"Our concept is to create a sense of community with the arts," said Judy Reynolds, co-director of the Women's Center. "Most creative efforts are a solitary process – done alone – we need to remember we have a community for support. This will be a real boost and a sense of connection with the community."

Making connection for support is also a goal of the all-day fourth annual Success Factors for Women Conference, which will be held at the Cocoanut Grove in Santa Cruz.

"When women come together, they find out they aren't alone," said Karen Clarke, co-founder with Sandy La Ruffa, of Success Factors. "You share and go away more aware and inspired."

Sally Hegelsen, author of "The Female Advantage," dubbed "the bible of the new female management style" by Fortune Magazine, will give the luncheon address, and keynote speaker Rosemary Brogan, Cabrillo College women's studies director, will return for the second time to share a historical perspective on the obstacles to equality that women have so far overcome.

"Women were so inspired by the information Rosemary gave. We had to have her back," Clarke said.

A host of personal and professional issues that women face will be addressed in nine separate workshops throughout the day, among them: asking for equitable wages and recognition in the workplace, the differences in men's and women's communication and managing styles, becoming politically active and starting a home-based business. Women will have a choice of three of the nine workshops.

The festival at Cabrillo has been designed so that women will feel free to try things they don't ordinarily do, Reynolds said. Reynolds hopes that if one dances then she will take drumming. And if she isn't familiar with any of the art forms, it's a perfect opportunity to learn something new.

After all, Reynolds, "The day is not about being judged and critiqued – it's about letting go and coming alive."

While the art conference will inspire fun and creativity, the women's success conference will be equally inspirational in more "nuts and bolts" ways.

"We need to understand politics and how politics affects us," Clarke said. "We need to know how to think about getting what we're worth – we volunteer too much. We get a job, and we're still doing it. It goes back to rolling bandages in the Civil War."

With all the progress women have made since then, why have a women's conference?

"We need to wake up," she said. "That's why."

The Success Factors Conference runs from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. It costs $59 and includes a continental breakfast and lunch. For reservations, call 462-0895.

Tickets for the Cabrillo celebration, which runs from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., cost $5 per workshop or $8 for the day with a choice of one workshop each in the morning and afternoon. For information and registration, call 479-6249.

Carmen Leon will conduct a workshop Saturday at Cabrillo College.

Workshops to stimulate 'artist within'

MURALIST AND Spectra artist Carmen Leon and poet/teacher Elba Sanchez are among the 12 artists who will be conducting workshops Saturday at the women's celebration, "Playing With Fire: Releasing the Artist Within," at Cabrillo College.

"My workshop will focus on the myths and motifs of Mezzo America – Southern Mexico and South America," Leon said. "I'm looking to uncover the significant images of female deities who've been forgotten."

Leon will tell stories of Peruvian earth goddess Mamapacha and her Aztec counterpart, Coatlicue. Participants will then create images from Leon's stories in a mural using watercolors, tempera paints, crayons and pastels. Participants need not worry about a lack of artistic accomplishment, she said. The symbols she will describe are "strong images, but those anyone can draw."

What is required, Leon said, is simply that participants be willing to uncover their own creative expression and connect with powerful role-model images of the past.

"We need to know there really were women who were important in the life of Mayan and Aztec peoples" she said.

Sanchez's workshop will focus on bilingual poetry, switching back and forth between two languages.

"I'm hoping women who come will be bilingual and interested in writing poetry in English, Spanish and Spanglish," Sanchez said. "They will decide which language is the most appropriate."

Writing exercises such as the kind she uses in her classes at UC-Santa Cruz will get participants' juices flowing, Sanchez said. She will also use music to stimulate responses.

"Sometimes I throw out words that stimulate all kinds of issues – and we make silly, funny poems," she said, "and music brings up emotions, passions, visions."

Themes will depend on the moods and images participants connect with, which could be women or nature – "whatever their creative juices bring to the surface," Sanchez said.

Whatever the form poems take on Saturday, the important thing is to share and listen.

"There is always so much to learn from all of the issues that come up in the poetry – in a real context with real substance," Sanchez said. "We have to be able to share. My own experience has been that that's the best part."

—Diane Noland

Workshops at Cabrillo College

THE FOLLOWING are 10 creative art workshops for adults at Saturday's event at Cabrillo College:

- Dance and Drumming from Congo, by Congolese singer, dancer and drummer Mabiba.
- Art for Healing, by artist and cancer survivor Wendy Trabor.
- Discovering the Actor Within, by director, actor and playwright Clifford Henderson.
- Create a Mural, by Latina Chicana artist Carmen Leon.
- Camino Al Corazon/A path to the heart, by poet/teacher/editor Elba Sanchez.
- Women Drum for Joy, by teacher, writer, artist Mary Blaettler, and poet, writer, ceremonial drummer Ardena Shankar.
- Giving Voice/Finding Form, by poet Maude Meehan.
- Vocal Motion, by singer, composer, dancer Paula Bliss.
- Honoring Impulse: Movement Exploration, by body worker/clinical hypnotherapist Val Loeffler.
- The Sacred Mandala: Envisioning a New World, by therapist, artist, textile designer Carmella Weintraub.

Two workshops will be given for children:

- The Heart of the Word: Poetry for Children, by poet/editor Patrice Vecchione.
- Art for Healing: A Children's Workshop, by Wendy Traber.

Women writers read

WRITERS Patrice Vecchione and Amber Coverdale Sumrall will present women writers reading their work in the 13th annual "In Celebration of the Muse," Friday at 7:30 p.m. at Palookaville in Santa Cruz.

The roster of accomplished writers include Cathryn Alpert, Shirley Ancheta, Ellen Bass, Barbara Bloom, Claire Braz-Valentine, Ana Chou, Lauren Crux, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, Maude Meehan, Ekua Omosupe, Bobbi Padilla, Sarah Rabkin, Elba Sanchez, Bonnie Schell, Ardena Shankar, Bettianne Shoney Sien, Roz Spafford, Claudia Sternbach, Louise Thornton and Joan Zimmerman.

Readings will be ASL interpreted.

Advance tickets are $12 and are available at Palookaville, 1133 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz; Cymbaline and Bookshop Santa Cruz. Tickets are $14 at the door.